

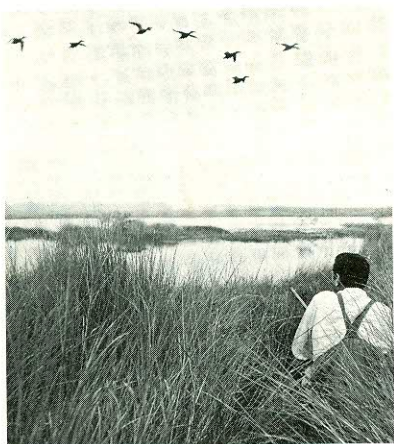
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1967

## Conservation Pledge

I give my  
pledge as an American  
to save and faithfully to  
defend from waste the  
natural resources of  
my country—its soil  
and minerals, its  
forests, waters  
and wildlife

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Louisiana's teal hunters bagged an estimated 96,000 teal during last year's nine day season. Some 33,000 special teal hunting permits were issued in the state and the bag by Louisiana hunters represented approximately 25 per cent of the total kill in the Mississippi and Central Flyways. The cover shows a teal hunter watching a flight of approaching ducks. The special season this year from September 22 through September 30 marks the third experimental September teal season. This represents wise management of a water-fowl resource that migrates through Louisiana before the regular duck season and returns to the United States after all duck hunting is over. (Cover photo by Robert Dennie.)

# LOUISIANA *Conservationist*

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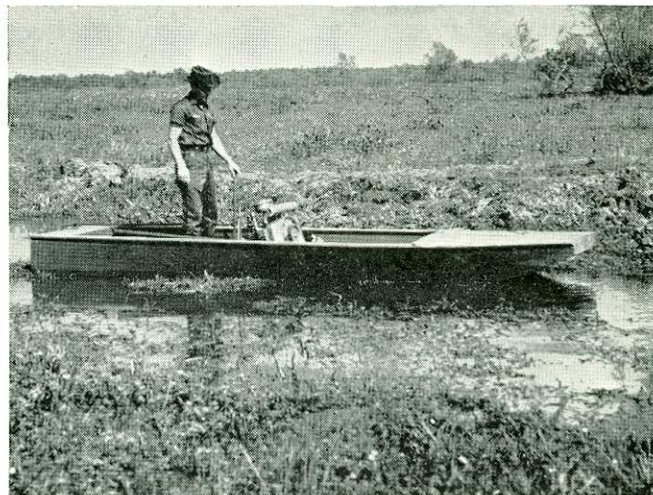
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Modern-day floating buggies as pictured above have solved many of the problems encountered in marsh traveled by the earlier slat-wheel buggies.



One of the most popular modern day type of marsh mud boats utilizes a small air-cooled engine and weedless propeller.

# They Ply The Marsh

Allan Esminger

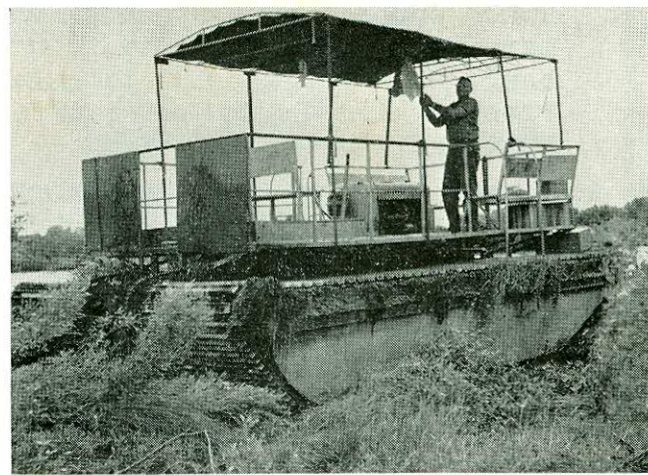
**T**HE FOUR and one-half million acres of marshland located in the southern portion of Louisiana can be described as a flat grass-covered area interlaced with numerous bayous, lakes, canals, ponds and potholes. The majority of these coastal marshes are not stable enough to support tree growth; although on some areas located near bayou banks, lake edges and shorelines, a narrow band of oaks, cypress and hackberry is found. These ridges were selected as home sites by the settlers of this area in the 18th century. Some farming and cattle were raised here although the majority of their revenue came from trapping and fishing.

Marsh travel at that time was very primitive. Sailing vessels were used on the large lakes and navigable rivers, and the pirogue, which was copied from the Indian's canoe, provided the only method of transportation into the more remote areas of the marsh. Although the pirogue has been modified many times since it was first used by the Indians, it is still one of our main methods of transportation in remote areas of marshland. This provided a means of travel through the water ways, but walking and in some more firmer marshes horses were used to a limited extent to tranverse these extensive grassland meadows.

It was not until the invention of the marsh



Air boats have been used successfully in some of the delta marshes by the Wild Life & Fisheries Commission to capture white-tailed deer for restocking purposes.



Another modern-day buggy is the track type which has aluminum slats attached to drive chains which travel over flotation tanks. This type of buggy is well suited to varied aquatic type of marshes



buggy in the early 1930's that man could cross many miles of these marshes in one day's time. This was a very primitive slat wheel machine mounted on a tractor frame. In its infancy, it was used by trappers to cut trails through the dense marsh vegetation and also by alligator hunters during the summer months. Although this buggy had many advantages it also had several disadvantages; first of all it could not float. This again restricted the early marsh traveler. Once bogged it was powerless and many a man hour was spent digging the large slat wheels from the bottom of a pond or bayou. Standard equipment carried on the old slat wheel buggies was a good supply of timbers to provide crossing for ditches and bayous, also several gallons of motor oil was carried just in case these ditches were deep and water was taken into the base of the engine during the crossing. If this occurred the oil was then drained and new oil was added to the engine, then the trip was continued. Crossings such as this, took several hours to accomplish.

It was not until the late 1930's that the first floating buggy was built. Flotation was accomplished by using large rubber tires, with rear axle steering. It was later improved upon and the rear axle steering was abandoned. This led to the development of the hollow drum type steel wheel buggy with front axle steering.

By this time the oil companies had expanded their seismic operations in the coastal marshes, and a floating type marsh buggy was very much in demand. Mudboat ditches were plowed by slat wheel buggies. This made easier, faster and cheaper travel by boat, but the ditches limited the range of the buggy because they could not cross them. Numerous access canals were being cut to new well sites and finally joining into a vast network of waterways. As these networks of canals

spread, the usefulness of the slat wheel buggy became obsolete.

It was not until after World War II, were such improvements added as four wheel drive, and power steering. Also, the chain drive track buggy was at this time in its infancy and later proved to be the most versatile of the three.

Along with the advancement of the marsh buggy, outboard motors were fast becoming the byword in deep water travel. Also, trappers were using mud boats to navigate the shallow marsh ditches. These flat-bottomed, water propeller driven boats were capable of operating in shallow water as each had a self contained water reservoir and cooling system.

Today, people who are involved in marsh travel have at their disposal numerous types of conveyances each suitable for a specific job. Outboard motors, mud boats, airboats and marsh buggies to name a few and helicopters are being used to a limited extent by the oil companies to carry supplies and crews to well sites in remote marsh location.

The evolution of marsh travel from the early period to the present time has spanned a period of not more than thirty-five years. This all came about in a relatively short period of time due to the relentless pursuit of man's needs, for trapping, fishing, and later for his pleasure of hunting and fishing, but mainly for the riches in oil and mineral deposits these marshes held. \*

### Pass-A-Loutre Waterfowl Management Area

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission will again operate the public hunting program on the Pass-a-Loutre Waterfowl Management area during the 1967-68 season.

All of the public camps have been renovated since Hurricane Betsy, and the marshes are in good condition to attract large numbers of wintering waterfowl to the area again this winter.

Detailed information regarding the procedure for applying and hunting dates will be published in the November-December issue of the LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST.

### Wildlife Shorts

Five kinds of sea turtles contribute to Louisiana's supply of market turtle meat. The gray sea turtle, smallest of the five Atlantic and Gulf sea turtles, seems to be the most common kind along our coast. They prefer to lay their eggs on the loose sandy beaches of the Chandeleur Chain, rather than on the more compact beaches west of the active delta of the Mississippi river.

The world's fastest dog is not the greyhound but the saluki which has been clocked at speeds up to 43 miles per hour.



Helicopters equipped with flotation gear are the ultimate in modern-day marsh conveyance.